

Tuesday Morning

DATELINE WASHINGTON

Week of June 6, 2000

1500 Gather for National Nutrition Summit - For the first time in 31 years, the federal government held a high-level, national conference addressing issues of health, hunger and nutrition this past week. Starting with a taped address from President Clinton, the National Nutrition Summit brought together scientists, researchers, practitioners and advocates to review the current status of our nation's nutritional well being. The conference was jointly sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Secretaries Dan Glickman (USDA) and Donna Shalala (DHHS) addressed the group at the first general session.

Opening the conference were Senators George McGovern and Bob Dole. The two former Senators served together in the early 1970s and, with Hubert Humphrey, made significant advances in federal policy on hunger and nutrition. McGovern, who now serves as U.S. Ambassador to the World Food Programme in Rome, spoke eloquently about the 1969 summit and the many policy initiatives and legislation that resulted including WIC, an improved food stamp program, CACFP, nutrition education and training, expanded school breakfast programs, and summer food. He credited the National School Lunch Program with virtually ending malnutrition and starvation in this country while acknowledging that there is still a problem with hunger. Finally, McGovern spoke of his vision to end hunger worldwide by emulating the American school meal programs throughout the world, an idea consistent with ASFSA's Going Global initiative.

Senator Dole began his remarks by recognizing ASFSA's Legislative Counsel, Marshall Matz and his contributions as lead counsel to the Senate Select Committee on Hunger in the 1970s. Dole spoke of the bipartisan nature of the issue of hunger and nutrition and praised his former colleagues, McGovern and Humphrey, for their leadership in passing legislation that has improved the well being of so many Americans.

The substance of the Summit fell into two distinct but interrelated themes - hunger and obesity. Dr. Christine Olson from Cornell University's Division of Nutrition Sciences pointed out that the uncertainty of where the next meal is coming from for people who are food insecure leads to unhealthy eating behaviors when food is available. These behaviors may lead to obesity even when poor nutrition is a problem.

Dr. Ron Kleinman from Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School discussed his findings of the correlation between school breakfast and

student behavior and performance which has bolstered ASFSA's efforts to promote expansion of the School Breakfast Program. Other speakers talked about the epidemic of obesity and its costs in lost productivity and medical treatment of preventable diseases.

The summit concluded with a call to action by Carol Tucker Foreman, Assistant Secretary for Food and Consumer Services in the Carter administration and currently Director of the Food Policy Institute at the Consumer Federation of America. Foreman inspired the audience to take from the summit a renewed commitment to solving the problems of obesity and hunger. She echoed many of the other speakers in stating that schools need to be better models of healthful eating and activity, and providing the education and tools for children to make wise decisions throughout their lives for their own health.

Griffith Addresses National Nutrition Summit - On Tuesday, May 30, ASFSA president Phyllis Griffith delivered a white paper at the National Nutrition Summit. Speaking on a panel addressing the expanding role of federal nutrition programs, Griffith presented the paper, titled School Meals - Benefits & Challenges. The paper discusses the history and many positive aspects of the nation's school meal programs, as well as the challenges and barriers to school food service programs' ability to deliver these benefits to more children. The paper concludes with a set of policy recommendations, all of which were made part of the official proceedings at the final general session. The recommendations are:

- The Secretary should have the statutory authority to regulate all food sales on campus at least until after the last lunch period.
- Schools should be required to provide a sufficient number of lunch periods of sufficient duration to ensure that all children have a minimum of 10 minutes for breakfast and 20 minutes for lunch after they receive their meal.
- Federal policy should recommend that students play first and return to the classroom after lunch.
- Federal, state and local governments should allocate sufficient funds to schools to reduce or eliminate the need to supplement appropriations with on-campus fundraising.
- Congress should fund nutrition education to the full extent authorized.

Additional policy recommendations were offered during the breakout session and are also in the summary including a call for providing breakfast, lunch and snacks to all children at no charge at the point of service as part of the education day. The summit attendees warmly received all of these recommendations.

New Dietary Guidelines Released at National Nutrition Summit - USDA released the year 2000 revision of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans at the National Nutrition Summit last week in Washington. The new guidelines sport a new format based on the ABC's for good health. The ABC's stand for: Aim for

fitness, Build a healthy base and Choose sensibly. This easy-to-remember format helps to organize the ten guidelines, an increase from the previous seven guidelines. In an attempt to combat the nation's growing obesity epidemic, a new guideline encourages Americans to be physically active 30 minutes of each day. Another new guideline suggests proper food safety techniques. In addition, modification to the existing grains; fruit and vegetable guideline included the separation of the grains from the fruit and vegetables into two distinct guidelines.

More About the New Dietary Guidelines

Harkin Comments on School Lunch Commodities - In his floor statement on the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000, Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) applauded inclusion of commodities for schools in the bill. Harkin stated, "in the nutrition assistance programs, there is \$110 million for school lunch commodity purchases. Again, we have a lot of surplus crops out there, a lot of surplus commodities. I think it is beneficial, both for the health of our children, and the school lunch program, the school breakfast program, and the summer feeding program, that we purchase these commodities and get them out to our young kids."

Agriculture Appropriations Bill Stalled in Congress- With the House and Senate appropriations subcommittees submitting their reports early last month, the FY2001 Agriculture Appropriations Bills (H.R. 4461 and S. 2536) were expected to be debated and voted upon by the end of May. An amendment ending the prohibition of medical aid to

Addressing the second major issue of the 2000 Legislative Issue Paper, both bills allocate necessary funding to complete the School Breakfast Research Pilot Program. The House report, addressing the third major issue of the Issue Paper, includes language that recommends USDA implement a study of foods sold in competition with the school lunch program.

The House and Senate were in recess last week for the Memorial Day holiday and are expected to debate the bills later in the month.

Health Organizations to Hold Press Conference on School Variety -

Addressing issues raised by ASFSA President Phyllis Griffith during a meeting last fall, Shirley Watkins, Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services at USDA, brought together representatives from several medical and health organizations to discuss the variety of foods available to children at school. The joint statement of the participating organizations (The American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Dietetic Association, National Hispanic Medical Association and National Medical Association) will be released at a June 7 press conference to be held at the National Press Club. A report will be available on the ASFSA Web site at

www.ASFSA.org the afternoon following the press conference. Tuesday Morning will report a summary of the statement next week.

McManus Honored in Congressional Record - Kay McManus, Director of Food/Nutrition Services for the North Kitsap School District in Poulsbo, Washington, was honored in the House of Representatives on May 25 by her Representative, Jay Inslee (D-Wash.). Congressman Inslee lauded McManus' work in child nutrition and for being the first recipient of ASFSA's Outstanding Director of the Year award.

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